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ABSTRACT

This report describes a program for improving reading comprehension in seventh graders by focusing on higher order thinking and metacognitive skills. The targeted population was in a growing, middle class community located in northern Illinois. The problem of below grade level reading comprehension was documented by Illinois Goals Assessment Program scores for reading and from examination of students' files as regards to reading scores. Additional data was also obtained through a teacher-selected assessment administered at the start of the program. Analysis of probable cause data revealed that students were lacking in literacy experiences due to a variety of environmental factors. Curricular deficiencies, inadequate emphasis on higher order thinking skills, and students' lack of awareness of metacognitive strategies also contributed to this problem. A review of solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable others, combined with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in the selection of this intervention: a more intensive use of strategies that fostered higher order thinking and metacognitive skills. Post intervention data indicated that students were successful in using the intervention's metacognitive plan which forced interaction with the text for the construction of meaning. The students' use of metacognitive reflection, along with comprehension tasks that required higher order thinking skills, resulted in improved reading comprehension. Contains 24 references and 4 tables of data. Appendixes present evaluation instruments, active reader forms and assessments, examples of purpose setting questions and comprehension tasks, examples of student work, textbook tests, and scoring rubrics. (Author/RS)

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ED 392 030

IMPROVING READING COMPREHENSION IN SEVENTH GRADERS

by

*Cynthia Morrill

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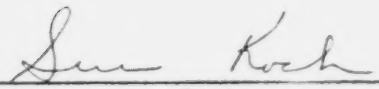

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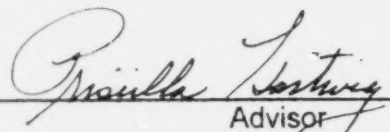

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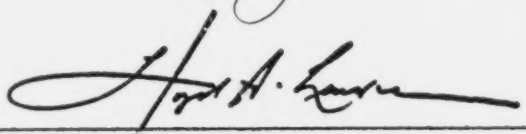

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Abstract

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Date: December 20, 1995

Title: Improving Reading Comprehension in Seventh Graders

This report described a program for improving reading comprehension in seventh graders by focusing on higher order thinking and metacognitive skills. The targeted population was in a growing, middle class community, located in northern Illinois. The problem of below grade level reading comprehension was documented by Illinois Goals Assessment Program (IGAP) scores for reading and from examining these students' files as regards to reading scores. Additional data was also obtained through a teacher-selected assessment administered at the start of the program.

Analysis of probable cause data revealed that students were lacking in literacy experiences due to a variety of environmental factors. Curricular deficiences, inadequate emphasis on higher order thinking skills, and students' lack of awareness of metacognitive strategies also contributed to this problem.

A review of solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable others, combined with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in the selection of this intervention: a more intensive use of strategies that fostered higher order thinking and metacognitive skills.

Post intervention data indicated that students were successful in using the intervention's metacognitive plan which forced interaction with the text for the construction of meaning. The students' use of metacognitive reflection, along with comprehension tasks that required higher order thinking skills, resulted in improved reading comprehension.

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Chapter 1

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM AND DESCRIPTION OF CONTEXT

General Statement of Problem

The targeted seventh grade students at a junior high school demonstrate reading skills below grade expectations as evidenced by teacher assessment, district assessment, and standardized test scores.

Immediate Problem Setting

There are 797 students at the junior high school, which houses seventh and eighth graders. The seventh grade enrollment is 392 students. This school is the only public facility of its kind in the community.

The student population of this junior high is 88.3 percent White, 1.5 percent Black, 9.7 percent Hispanic, and 0.05 percent Asian. The student population from low income backgrounds is 13.9 percent as reported in the 1993 School Report Card. This compares with a 15.6 percent at the district level and a 30.3 percent at the state level. The School Report Card also states that this school has a 93.8 percent attendance rate (nearly identical to the state) and a 13.0 percent student mobility rate which is lower than the state rate of 20.0 percent. This school has a low chronic truancy rate of nine-tenths percent, even lower than the

district rate of three and eight-tenths percent and the state rate of two and two-tenths percent.

This junior high school is administered by one principal, one vice-principal, and seven administrative department heads for seven designated subject areas. There are three secretaries, two counselors, and one nurse. There are 49 faculty members whose average years of teaching experience is 16. A masters degree or above has been earned by 48 percent of these teachers with the remaining 52 percent holding a degree somewhere between a bachelor's and a masters. The immediate administrative and teaching staff of this school (totaling 54) has 33 women and 21 men, all of whom are White except for one Black. The regular classroom teacher in this school has an average class size of 25.3 students.

This junior high school has a traditionally structured curriculum rather than a middle school curricular approach. Each teacher teaches within his/her subject area with little or no contact with other teachers within his/her own discipline or with other disciplines. The students are heterogenously grouped except in language arts.

A language arts teacher has separate classes for English and reading. These classes are heterogenously grouped except at the extremes of ability; students of very high ability and very low ability are grouped respectively. For seventh graders, this recommendation is made the by

the sixth grade teachers. The English classes use traditional grammar and vocabulary texts, and the reading classes use a literature anthology divided by genres. There is no direct articulation between the English and the reading classes. Both curricula are specific to that course only; what is written about in English is not what was read in reading.

The school is a new facility, opened in January 1990. It is in a community unit district that includes a small city and the majority of one county, with an estimated enrollment of 4,840 students, in kindergarten through twelfth grade. There is one high school, the junior high school, six elementary schools (kindergarten through sixth grade), and a special education facility. Special education services are available to the mentally impaired, the hearing impaired, the visually impaired, and to learning disabled children. The district is administered by an appointed superintendent of schools, an assistant superintendent of business, an assistant superintendent of curriculum, and a director of special education. The Board of Education is comprised of seven members elected to four-year terms. They serve without compensation and are to deal with situations pertaining to budget, curriculum, staffing, facilities, and discipline. Due to the district's rapidly growing population, a new 800-student elementary school (kindergarten through sixth grade) is scheduled to open January 1996, and one elementary school (K-6), after remodeling, will double its capacity.

Description of Surrounding Community

The community served by the district includes one small city and the majority of one county with a population of 35,341. The racial composition of this Midwest community is 95 percent White, 0.6 percent Black, and 4.4 percent other. The Hispanic population is calculated at six and four-tenths percent regardless of the racial mix. In other words, a pure Hispanic, a White/Hispanic mix, a Black/Hispanic mix, and so forth were included in that percentage (School Report Card, 1993).

The community has experienced considerable residential growth for the past decade. During the '80's, the population increased 18.2 percent; and since 1990, the population has increased nine and eight-tenths percent. This population increase is a result, in large part (45 percent), of a migration from a very large metropolitan city and its suburbs. Twenty-one percent of the immigrants are from communities within the state, 16 percent are from out of state, and 15 percent are from a nearby city that is 15 miles away (School Report Card, 1993).

The community has a wide range of educational levels among the adult population. Three quarters (75.4 percent) are high school graduates or better. This percentage is fairly evenly split between high school graduates (40.1 percent) and beyond high school (35.3 percent). That does leave, however, nearly one-quarter of the adult population (24.5 percent) not having completed a high school education.

The manufacturing sector employs 59 percent of the population in the community, followed by retail trade at 16 percent, and service jobs at 13 percent. The unemployment rate for 1993 was nine and one-tenths percent. The median family income was $38,586 (Growth Dimensions, 1993).

The major problem for the school district in this community is the rapidly increasing population. The draw to this community is its small town/small school setting, and a property tax rate that is among the lowest in the state. A nearby major interstate allows relatively easy commuting to higher-paying jobs in a major metropolitan area less than 75 miles away. The school district is having great difficulty in accommodating this rapid increase in the school population. All schools are at, or near, capacity with no let-up in sight. The School Board's actions have shown a desire to keep the tax rate low. The building of a new 800-student elementary school (K-6) and the remodeling of an existing elementary school (K-6) to double its capacity will help. But the high school and the junior high are going to soon be over capacity, if this population trend continues as predicted. Much controversy exists in the community over how to solve the overcrowding situation.

Regional and National Context of Problem

When parents are asked if they think their baby will learn to talk, the overwhelming response is "of course!"

When they are asked if they think their baby will learn to read, the response becomes "I hope so." In February 1990, President George Bush and the governors established a set of national education goals. One of those goals was that, by the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the skills necesssary to compete in a global economy, and to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. Yet, the Gallup Organization reveals that only 32 percent of the 1600 adults asked believed that this goal was likely to be achieved (Information Plus, 1992).

Lack of public confidence in this issue of literacy is well-founded. In 1988, The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) tested the reading performance of students in grades three, seven, and eleven in public and private schools. Although virtually all students displayed basic reading skills and strategies that allowed them to perform some relatively uncomplicated tasks successfully, by age nine, only five percent reached the highest level of proficiency. Most students demonstrated an inability to comprehend passages that were longer and more complex or dealt with specialized subject matter. Just over ten percent of the seventh and eighth graders (13-year-olds) were consistently able to understand, summarize, and explain relatively complicated information. Fewer than half of the 17-year-olds could consistently understand, summarize, and explain relatively complicated information. This NAEP testing program was started in 1971. By 1988,

improvement was noted but only marginally (Information Plus, 1992).

Billions of education tax dollars have been spent, yet nine out of ten children who start first grade in the bottom reading group stay in the bottom reading group throughout elementary school. That label alone predicts, with alarming accuracy, who will succeed and who will fail in life (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1991).

As these children grow to adulthood, their numbers represent more than one-third of the entire adult population of the United States. This population does not have the skills required to perform most basic tasks, like read a newspaper article or a poison warning on a can of pesticide, or calculate whether a paycheck is correct, or address a letter that will reach its destination. At best, they "just get by" (Kozol, 1985).

This rate of functional illiteracy has increased because the society in which we live is more complex. High-tech jobs require reading training manuals that are seldom written at less than a ninth grade reading level. Kozol quotes Dorothy Shields, the education director of the AFL-CIO as saying, "By the 1990's, anyone who doesn't have at least a twelfth grade reading, writing, and calculating level will be absolutely lost." (Kozol, 1985, p. 58).

Reading teachers know that few people in our society are successful without being able to read, write, and communicate easily. With all the problems and needs that

the students of today bring to the classroom, the challenge to their reading teachers is great. The challenge to give them the foundation of success--literacy--is paramount.

> Our responsibility as literacy teachers has not changed, in this regard at least, for two hundred years or more. Whichever way we go about it, we owe all the children, whatever their backgrounds, the prize of literacy. With that prize, who knows what they may go on to achieve? (Fisher & Johnson, 1994, p.5).

Chapter 2

PROBLEM EVIDENCE AND PROBABLE CAUSE

Problem Evidence

To document the targeted students' comprehension skills, three sources of data were utilized. The Illinois Goals Assessment Program (IGAP) scores in reading were collected, information about the students' reading performance from district files was gathered, and a teacher-selected assessment was admininstered.

The collected data showed that, of the 29 targeted students, approximately one-third had achieved above average scores. The IGAP reading test assessed both narrative (story-type) and expository (information-type) passages. The End-of-Book Test assessed literary elements of fiction (plot, setting, conflict, etc.) and study/research skills (map reading, outlines, using an index, prefixes/suffixes, etc.). The teacher-selected assessment tested the students' comprehension level of two fiction stories. Results of the data collection are presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1
IGAP Reading Test Scores
March 1995

Score Classes	Number of Students
450 - 500	0
400 - 499	2
350 - 399	1
300 -349	3
250 - 299	7
200 - 249	8
150 - 199	6
100 - 149	2

Table 2
Number of Students in Score Classes
End-of-Book Test, May 1995;
Teacher Selected Assessments, Sept. 1995

Score Classes	End-of-book Test # of students	Teacher's Assessment 1 # of students	Teacher's Assessment 2 # of students
90 - 100%	1	2	2
80 - 89 %	6	5	4
70 - 79 %	2	6	3
60 - 69 %	7	7	2
50 - 59 %	10	3	9
40 - 49 %	3	1	4
30 - 39 %	0	4	3
20 - 29 %	0	0	0
10 - 19 %	0	1	1
0 - 9 %	0	0	1

The IGAP results had an average scaled **class** score of 251. The average scaled **school** score was 276; the average scaled **district** score was 294; and the average scaled **state** score was 260. Approximately 60 percent of the targeted students scored below their counterparts within the school, the district, and across the state.

The End-of-Book Test showed nine students at 70 percent or better, but still 20 students (better than two-thirds) fall between 40 percent and 60 percent. For a test that was to assess how well the textbook's skills were mastered, this class' average score was 62 percent.

The teacher-selected assessment reveals low comprehension scores also. The average class score for Assessment Test #1 was 60 percent; for Assessment Test #2, the average score was 53 percent.

These data sources show that approximately two-thirds of the targeted students are scoring below average on a variety of assessment tools. These low scores would constitute reading below grade expectations.

Probable Causes

Probable cause data from researching the current literature tend to focus on two major areas: (1) curricular deficiencies and ineffective teaching strategies and (2) the environment from which the student comes. All of the causes discussed in this literature review apply to the selected research group and site.

As the need for a functionally literate society has increased in our high-tech culture, controversies over why so few Americans can understand relatively complicated material have mushroomed. And, of course, a convenient target for why schools fail to make children literate are the teachers. "They (teachers) are urged to stop using the wrong method or to concentrate on using the right method of teaching children to read." (Smith, 1992, p. 432). Although a harsh indictment, this view is not unsubstantiated. The research does not suggest that teachers are incompetent or uncaring. It's just that which method is right and which is wrong is constantly being debated. However, a definite trend toward a more meaningful approach to reading instruction is clearly called for.

Most educators agree that competent comprehenders are active readers who construct meaning as they read. If this involvement of the reader with the text is consistently neglected, the reader may soon see no purpose for the reading and lose interest. Only a very self-motivated student will persist in the face of the most traditional reading comprehension strategy--the standard question-and-answer routine that follows most reading assignments (Flood & Lapp, 1991).

Ironically, the fact that these detail-recalling questions have been answered correctly does not mean that the student has comprehended the over-all meaning of the selection. This is because a questioning strategy that

calls for vigorous thinking (or higher order thinking) has not been applied (Nessel, 1987). "Comprehension must be a problem-solving process that invites critical, flexible, and insightful thinking," echos Miholic (1994). Yet this mere information-retrieval system is still the most common textbook/teacher method used today.

Another controversy that rages about reading instruction revolves around the initial stages of literacy acquisition. It is believed by many that by mastering certain isolated "subskills," comprenension will automatically follow. More than 200 separate comprehension subskills have been identified by this school of thought, including decoding (phonics), reading rate, enunciation, and inflection. Textbooks reflecting this philsosphy contain selections designed to stress these subskills. The selections are not bona fide literature from actual authors but very carefully constructed tools to emphasize specific subskills. It is not surprising that student interest dies quickly with such reading material (Stayter & Allington, 1991).

Assessment of reading comprehension also lacks meaning with this subskill method. If a student reads fluently and enunciates clearly, he may still not comprehend the selection, argues Stayton and Allington. Although the subskill may be assessed, comprehension has not.

This subskills approach completely ignores critical thinking strategies, and it relegates literature to the status of an "extra." When a student has finished his "reading work," then he may go browse through the "real

literature books." A poorer reader would have even less time for this type of activity. With this method, then, it should not be surprising that although we may have a growth in basic literacy, it has been at the expense of critical thinking (Burroughs, 1993).

Another target for why children are not achieving acceptable literacy levels is family involvement. Research clearly shows that family involvement is a critical factor in achieving success in school. Values (such as honesty and responsibility) instilled by parents are twice as important for school achievement as family income or educational background. Families who set realistic schoolwork standards, who show interest and concern, and who praise their children's skills and efforts have children who are successful in school. Interestingly, parents who show affection and set academic goals have children who are more successful than parents who emphasize affection or academic goals. Good reading skills are particularly dependent on learning activities in the home (U.S. Department of Education, 1994).

Although acknowledging that the single most important activity for eventual reading success is reading aloud to children, less than half of parents with children under age nine read to their children every day, and only 13 percent read with children aged 9 to 13. The availability of reading material in the home, whether the child reads it independently or is read to, is also directly associated with achievement in reading comprehension. This area, too,

is controlled by parents (Lee & Croninger, 1994).

So why is this effective and cost-free factor of family involvement not on the increase? The reasons can be seen in the modern lifestyle.

Most parents nowadays are employed. That leaves them with less time and energy to devote to a diligent surveillence of their children's activities--less time for library visits, for monitoring TV watching, for monitoring after-school activities, for establishing and maintaining daily homework schedules, for being available to discuss schoolwork or youthful problems.

Add to this a dramatic rise in the number of teenage parents (whose parenting skills are tenuous at best) and a rise in the number of children living in poverty (more than at any time since 1965), and more than just time constraints enters the picture (U.S. Department of Education, 1994).

Many parents feel they lack the knowledge to know what kind of guidance they should provide their child for success in school. They perceive the teacher as having a far greater influence on a child's learning than a parent would have. Low income and/or low education environments will have an even more pronounced tendency to undervalue the importance of parental involvement.

These environments, in addition, are more likely to limit a student's opportunities at home and after school. Visits to libraries, museums, recreational facilities-even if free--are seldom used to advantage. The feeling

here is that the school will take care of all this. There will be little, if any, family-school contact if language barriers are present or if the parents had bad school experiences themselves (U.S. Department of Education).

The fact that this vital role of family involvement has not received the attention it deserves is not surprising, says Copperman (1978). Up until the 1960's, most educators believed that twelve years of schooling would surely override the influences of socioeconomic background. This view has completely reversed itself. School has a minimal effect on a child's learning. The really potent forces are the family and the peer group. And since the amount of time children are spending with their parents is declining, the amount of time they are spending with their peers and with television is increasing.

Children today show a greater dependence on their peers than ever before. Many of today's youths look down on intellectual achievement. Unfortunately, this is especially so for low income and minority students.

Television's influence is even worse, continues Copperman. Children who watch more than ten hours of TV a week show a sharp drop in academic achievement over their peers whose TV-watching is more moderate. Both time robbed from schoolwork and the content of TV programs themselves have had their effect on children. There is the expectation that learning should be easy and passive, that "success" (defined as money and popularity) is not reached by anything

purported by schools. If this were so, then our classroom teachers should be more like our TV idols. Today's youth tends toward immediate gratification and enjoyment of life and views school as time spent impeding them towards this goal. Long-term goal setting and the willingness to sacrifice and work hard to achieve this are not values emphasized by TV.

A summary of the probable causes as to why the targeted seventh graders are reading below grade expectations would be as follows:

1. lack of higher order thinking skills involving the reader with the text
2. lack of students' awareness of metacognitive strategies
3. uninteresting reading material that emphasizes reading skills not genuine literature content
4. lack of meaningful assessment--emphasis on reading rate and decoding rather than on meaning
5. lack of parental involvement and support
6. lack of literacy environment in the home, especially if a low income or low education home
7. strong peer group pressure that scoffs at success in school
8. less time spent reading and more time spent TV watching
9. a value shift from working for a good education to superficial and immediate gratifications espoused by peers and TV.

Chapter 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Review of the Literature

Analysis of probable cause data suggests that ineffective teaching strategies and literacy-poor home environments are key factors to poor reading comprehension skills. Since a classroom teacher has little control over the home environment, it becomes apparent that solutions to this problem should focus on improving teaching strategies. A review of the literature corroborates this stance. Although different terminologies are used, a recurrent theme among many researchers is to use higher order thinking and metacognitive skills, in a cooperative learning setting.

Flood and Lapp (1991) do refer to Carver who, in his 1987 study entitled "Research in Literacy: Merging Perspectives," argues that comprehension skills cannot be taugnt. Yet, the vast majority of rsearchers, using a variety of metnods, argue to the contrary. What Carver finds suspect, say Flood and Lapp (1991), are the studies upon which these comprehension researchers base their findings. Reading easy material, reading the same type of

material, and practicing a certain skill over and over, may result in improved scores on some standard assessment tool based on one kind of text, says Carver. But none of these studies use data collected over a long period of time (one year or more) or use material not carefully couched in the skills and genre that were stressed. There is no solid evidence that gains due to practicing specific reading skills in these controlled settings will transfer to reading ability in general. Teaching certain study skills may help students comprehend basic meaning more effectively, but real comprehension is achieved only by a significant increase in the time spent reading, concludes Carver.

These criticisms are acknowledged by all the researchers, however. Any study that deals with the teaching of comprehension must be careful to ask "Comprehesion of what, by whom, under what conditions, and for what purposes?" Keeping any study's definition and purpose clearly in mind, there is ample and increasing evidence that certain techniques have been very effective in improving reading comprehension. And the one most often noted is a strong emphasis on higher order thinking and metacognitive skills. Stressing these skills has proven especially beneficial for seventh/eighth graders (Flood & Lapp, 1991).

Research comparing good readers to poor readers clearly shows that reading is a **thinking process**. Meaning is not sealed within the text; it is created by the reader. There must be an interaction between reader and text, and, until

the reader has brought some meaning within himself to the text, comprehesion cannot occur. "Throughout, the reader uses metacognitive processes to monitor, control, and advance the search for meaning." (Flood & Lapp, 1991, p. 732). Contemporary researchers may debate how to describe these mental processes, but there is agreement that these strategies are multi-stepped (progressing from simple thinking to more complex thinking) and can be adapted to many different kinds of texts. Research now suggests that, if these processes are taught and modeled, comprehension can be improved. (Chance, 1992; Cunningham & Wall, 1994; Langer, 1993).

Reviewing the research, a competent reader's metacognitive plan may be summarized as follows: (1) creating meaning from the text itself (noting the title, the pictures, the form), (2) creating meaning by drawing from prior knowledge and experience (such as paraphrasing, inferencing, and predicting), (3) beginning to integrate new and existing knowledge, and (4) reflecting or reacting to the reading experience (evaluating and making application of the ideas in the text to new situations). Some researchers may vary the number of steps and//or the intensity of each step, but this basic metacognitive plan remains the same in principle. Mastering a process of this kind, concludes most studies, will construct meaning for the reader. (Chance, 1992; Cunningham & Wall, 1994; Langer, 1993).

Langer's (1993) study entitled, "Approaches Toward Meaning in Low- and High-Rated Readers," first taught this metacognitive process to 12 seventh graders (six labeled as below average students; six labeled as above average students) and then compared the meaning-making approaches of the two groups. She found that the initial approaches for low and high readers were much the same. Gaining meaning from print, calling upon a variety of knowledge sources, even vocabulary knowledge, were approaches used effectively by both groups. But, although steps one and two were used, the prior knowledge base of the low reader was much weaker than that of the high reader. Because this base was weak, the low reader found if difficult, if not impossible, to progress to steps three and four. The low reader could not build upon what he understands like the high reader could. Logically, then, more substantive critical comments were made by the high readers, whereas the low readers seldom progressed beyond a summary of the text.

Langer's (1993) study concluded that these readers (low readers especially) gained much by being taught that meaning can be developed by using this four-step metacognitive process. She also emphasized that "shared think-alouds" before, during, and after reading did much to aid all readers to improve their abilities at all levels of the process, especially the higher thinking levels.

The Reader Response method for teaching literature, first introduced as early as 1938, agrees that reading is not the discovery of meaning but the **creation** of it. Its

premise is that a reader's personal interpretation of a tex is a critical element in meaning-making. This method concurs that a metacognitive process linking the text to something within the student is needed for comprehension to be genuine (Flood & Lapp, 1991).

Reciprocal teaching is another instructional technique to enhance comprehension. Four strategies form the foundation of reciprocal teaching: (1) questioning, (2) summarizing, (3) clarifying, and (4) predicting. It, too, is a metacognitive activity that calls for a reader's personal reactions to a text and shared learning among students. The dialogue within a reciprocal group is more structured than the four-step process previously described, but the effect on comprehension is also very positive (Frances & Eckart, 1992).

A reciprocal reading group has one student designated as the "teacher," but each student has many opportunities to respond. The group questions each other about the material, cooperatively agrees on a summary, seeks any clarifications needed, and makes as many predictions as the group can generate at that point in the reading material. Students trained in this technique showed not only improved academic achievement but also more positive attitudes towards reading.

Sanacore (1985) also acknowledges that metacognitive strategies must be an integral part of the active process of comprehension. Although he doesn't specifically refer to reciprocal teaching, many of that method's tenets have his

recommendation. Students should be taught to generate questions as they read (using prediction and/or inference if applicable). They should be taught to stop at reasonable intervals (depending upon the purpose of the reading) to clarify any blocks to comprehension--like vocabulary clarification or unfamiliar syntax or unclear allusions. It is essential that students be taught to stop reading material through, nonstop, without metacognitively monitoring their own comprehension as they go along.

Recognizing that fluent oral reading and even above-average intelligence does not mean that students have sound strategies to comprehend challenging texts, Cunningham and Wall (1994) developed an even more structured comprenension framework than recirpocal teaching or the loosely designed four-step process explained by Langer. They advocate a six-step framework that again emphasizes **creating** meaning rather than discovering it.

Step 1: Provide background (such as vocabulary information or a review of previously taught skills that would be needed for the lesson.)

Step 2: Set a purpose for the reading. "Purpose" here would be defined as either what the students should focus on while they read, or a clear preview of the task they will be asked to perform after reading. The students should use this purpose to select the strategies they will use during reading. The more difficult the text, the more specific the purpose should be. "The test of a good purpose for reading is whether it facilitates the students' comprehension beyond

what they would have achieved without it." (Cunningham & Wall, 1994, p. 481).

This purpose-setting step alone is especially emphasized by some researchers. This may start as a teacher-directed element but should be gradually replaced by students' setting their own purposes. The purpose should drive the student throughout the reading passage and should be the first element of the post-reading activity (Blanton, Wood, & Moorman, 1991).

Naughton (1993) suggests creative mapping as a good purpose-setter. Creative mapping, combining the concepts of graphic organizers and visual arts, enables the reader to not only direct their attention to the text but also to look within themselves and to make associations as they fill in the map. The teacher may need to provide the maps in the initial stages, but students will become adept at creating their own maps. It should be stressed that the objective is not artistic ability, but rather a pictorial framework of the text's main idea and supporting details. Sharing these maps with fellow students encourages critical observation and evaluation. The reader has also created a personal interpretation and facilitated recall.

Step 3: Read silently for the purpose given.

Step 4: Have the students **as a group** perform a task which directly reflects and measures how well the students fulfilled the purpose for the reading. There should be a straightforward and obvious relationship between the purpose

and the comprehension task. A well-crafted comprehension task does not have a right or wrong outcome. It should also make it possible for students to reach a more sophisticated level of understanding than they would have achieved on their own.

Step 5: Have the students **as a group** evaluate the task performance. This step requires consensus and may often be done simultaneously with step four. Again, the idea is to have the students evaluate themselves rather than relying on teacher evaluation. Any disagreement should require the students to return to the text to support their point of view.

Step 6: Have the students think about what they learned from doing the first five steps. The purpose of this step is to build metacognitive control over the strategies of this framework. The teacher should help students realize what and why certain strategies were used for a given situation. The benefit of this should be to heighten the students' awareness of this whole process and have them begin to internalize it until it becomes automatic.

Ziegert (1994) agrees that this reflection step is crucial. It is also, she regretfully adds, the step most often skipped. Ziegert has developed a Reflection Guide that she has found effective. It is intended to be used after reading, but some may prefer to use it while they read. The first part of the Guide has students list the main ideas. The second and third parts have students list

questions that they still have and to make applications to other situations based on the information just read. These Reflection Guides are best used with expository rather than narrative material. Although a greatly abbreviated strategy compared to Cunningham and Wall's six-step framework, this, too, intends to make students aware of a usable tool to achieve comprehension.

A metacognitive plan calling for an interaction between the reader and the text is also the cornerstone of a study by Sandra Chance (1992). The higher order cognitive skills of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation are major parts of her plan, aired during open-ended discussion groups. Since standardized testing continues to play an important role in student assessment, Chance also adds a practical side to her metacognitive plan. She calls these the **test-wiseness** skills. These include reading the questions **before** reading the material, using context for inferential thinking, reading **all** the answers in a multiple choice situation before making a choice, and narrowing the field of choice by eliminating poor choices before making an **educated** guess. As logical as these skills may seem, this study concludes that all students will not develop these **test-wiseness** skills simply by taking tests. The metacognitive process must be taught.

Chance also emphasizes that we learn to read by reading. Therefore, important facets of any reading program should be library visits, book talks, and time set aside for recreational reading. Time must be set aside for this type

of free reading, including time for personal reactions and interpretations shared among the students and with the teacher. Discussions well beyond plot summary and detail-recall will abound in this "grade-less" climate of spontaneous exchange of ideas.

Atwell (1987) also supports these book-sharing discussions as a critical factor for a reading classroom. "When we invite the readers' minds to meet books in our classrooms, we invite the messiness of human response...[when we]invite personal meaning, [we increase]the distinct possibility that [a kid] will grow up to become...someone who just plain loves books and reading." (p. 154). If we achieve this goal, we need not worry about whether or not comprehension has occurred.

Project Outcomes and Solution Components

The terminal objective of this problem intervention is related to the documented data presented in Chapter 2. This data indicated that students were reading below grade expectations. The probable cause data from the literature indicated a need for a more intensive use of strategies that foster higher order thinking and metacognitive skills. Therefore, the objective responds to this need:

As a result of a more intensive use of strategies that foster higher order thinking and metacognitive skills, during the period of August 1995 to November 1995, the seventh grade students from the targeted class will increase their reading comprehension skills, as measured by teacher-made assessments and student presentations/projects.

In order to accomplish the terminal objective, the following processes are necessary:

1. Materials that foster higher order thinking and metacognitive skills will be developed to fit the curriculum.
2. A series of learning activities that address reading comprehension will be developed.
3. Assessment tools for these learning activities will be developed.
4. Curricular units reflecting these decisions will be constructed.
5. A schedule to implement these materials will be determined.

Action Plan for the Intervention

The two most emphasized and most intertwined components of any comprehension enhancement method researched were those of higher order thinking and metacognitive skills. Never were these skills taught and modeled with the student in an isolated and independent mode. Much discussion and shared learning was utilized. With these ideas in mind, the following action plan was developed.

This plan blends the tenets of reciprocal teaching (questioning, summarizing, clarifying, and predicting) with many aspects of Cunningham and Wall's six-step framework. It includes strong purpose-setting within the questioning phase of reciprocal teaching, and graphic organizers/mind maps can be fused with the summary stage. A comprehension task that will call for higher order thinking skills will follow a designated amount of reading material. Reflection upon the activities after each assignment will be the

metacognitive follow-up.

A variety of literary genres was used to fit the curricular needs of the research site. Before each reading assignment, a metacognitive form to be used during reading will be given to the students. (Appendix B) The purpose for the reading will be set and a comprehension task (or sometimes tasks), closely related to that purpose, will also be made known to the student. Specific examples of these purposes and assignments are in Appendix C. Examples of student work can be found in Appendix D.

An approximate timeline for the Action Plan is as follows. (The order of the literary genres is not significant.):

I. Week One

   A. All data for the problem statistics will be gathered (IGAP scores and file information).

   B. Two comprehension pretests will be given. (Appendix A)

II. Week Two--A short story will be taught that introduces the form that will be filled out during the reading. (This form-in Appendix B--uses the higher order thinking skills of questioning and predicting. It also leads the student through a specific strategy that will be used to approach any reading assignment. This strategy is meant to enable the student to develop a metacognitive plan for reading assignments.)

III. Weeks Three and Four--applying the intervention with four fables, two myths, and two legends.

IV. Weeks Five and Six--applying the intervention with four nonfiction selections.

V. Weeks Seven and Eight--applying the intervention with two textbook sections of poetry.

VI. Weeks Nine, Ten, and Eleven--applying the intervention with three drama selections.

VII. Week Twelve--Two comprehension posttests will be given. (Appendix A)

Methods of Assessment

In order to assess the effects of the intervention, pretests and posttests will be given. These tests are provided by the textbook used at the site. These tests will cover short stories and have been chosen by the teacher, who determined that the tests were of approximately equal levels of difficulty. Textbook tests (Appendix E) covering the content of the reading material will also be given. Scoring rubrics (Appendix F), developed by the teacher, will be used to assess the comprehension tasks.

Chapter 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of Intervention

The objective of this project was to increase reading comprehension skills by using strategies that placed more emphasis on higher order thinking and metacogntive skills. The intervention period was scheduled to cover twelve weeks.

Before the action plan was put into effect, two pretests covering two short stories in the textbook were given (Appendix A). Adding this data to that already collected, all results were analyzed.

The intervention began with the teaching of a short story from the textbook. A form designed by the researcher was introduced to the students. This form fulfilled three of the researcher's goals: (a) a purpose-setting question, (b) the higher order thinking skills of summarizing, questioning, and predicting, and (c) metacognitive reflection. The researcher's ultimate goal for this form is to have the student internalize this method as a metacognitive plan for any reading assignment. The student must interact with the text to successfully complete this form (Appendix B). This form was referred to as the Active Reader form.

The third and fourth week of the research period applied the Active Reader form to the task of reading four fables, two myths, and two legends from the textbook. The reading of the four short fables was done with a partner. One form for each fable was completed by the twosome. The longer myths and legends were read in groups of three. One form for each myth and each legend was completed by these trios. It was decided by the researcher to use creative maps for the "summary" part of the form.

The comprehension tasks for this unit of study involved one individual and one group task. The individual task made use of a Venn diagram. The student filled in this graphic organizer by noting the similarities and the differences between fables, myths, and legends. The group task was to write a fable or a myth or a legend, illustrate (or creatively map) the tale, and share it with the class. This was done in groups of three.

Students assessed the presentations by using the graphic organizers to see if the characteristics of the chosen genre were observed. The Active Reader forms were assessed using the rubric also designed by the researcher (Appendix B). Further assessments included the five tests provided by the textbook. These were given as the various reading assignments were completed. One test covered the four fables; one test for each myth; and one test for each legend.

At this point the researcher decided to modify the Active Reader form. Having used this very loosely structured form through one unit of study, the researcher felt that a more step-by-step structure was needed. The students needed more definite guidelines to effectively interact with the text. So a new Active Reader form was designed (Appendix B).

The first unit of study, using very new procedures for the students, also took longer to complete than anticipated. Already into the sixth week of the research period, the researcher decided to reduce the number of nonfiction selections from four to two. These essays from the textbook were needed to help introduce the poetry section that was to follow. Also in an effort to stay on schedule, the researcher reduced the poetry sections from two to one.

The new Active Reader form was then applied to the task of reading two nonfiction selections. These essays were read individually with a form completed for each.

The comprehension task for this unit of study was completed in conjunction with the poetry section. Both these essays were written by poets. One of the main points of each essay was to suggest a method that could be followed that would enhance one's understanding and enjoyment of poetry. The comprehension task, then, was to choose two of the five poems from the poetry section and apply the technique suggested by each author to each poem respectively. This task, of course, could not be completed

until the poetry section had been studied. Although completed individually, many of these were shared with the class.

Assessment of the comprehension task was determined by asking if that author's method had been correctly followed. The rubric for the Active Reader form assessed the completed forms; and two tests, one for each essay and provided by the textbook, were given.

The eighth week of the research period applied the Active Reader form to the task of reading five poems. Working individually, the students completed a form for each poem. Then, with a partner, they discussed these poems and the ideas on each other's forms. Another form, combining the ideas of both students, was then filled out and given to the researcher.

The comprehension task outlined for the nonfiction essays was completed at this point. The comprehension task for this unit of study was completed individually. The student could compose an original poem or could choose a poem to share with the class. Criteria for both these options is found in Appendix C. The student read his poem to the class. The other students copied the name of the poem, the name of the poet, and wrote at least two comments about the poem that would demonstrate a knowledge of poetic principles.

Assessments for all these assignments were as follows: (1) the Active Reader form rubric, (2) the scoring rubric

for the comprehension task is found in Appendix F, and (3) a test provided by the textbook was given.

The twelfth week of the research period having arrived, there was no time to apply the Active Reader form to the task of reading three drama selections from the textbook. During this final week the two scheduled posttests were given. One test was given each day so that the researcher could be assured that the results would reflect the student's own comprehension. The tests were admininstered under these conditions: During one class period, the student reads the short story while filling out an Active Reader form and then completes the test. The pretests, of course, had no Active Reader form filled out nor any training in how to be an active reader. The pretests involved reading the story and completing the test. Both the pretests and the posttests were open-book. All textbook tests given during this research period were open-book.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

The data analysis from Chapter 2 showed that approximately two-thirds of the targeted students were scoring below average on a variety of assessment tools. Post-intervention data shows a reversal of this statistic. Defining "average" as 70 percent, two-thirds of the students scored **above** average on the assessment tests used during the research period.

Table 3

Pre and Post Teacher-Selected Assessments
Number of Students in Score Classes
Sept. 1995 - Nov. 1995

Score Class	Pretests		Posttests	
% Correct Responses	Assessment 1 # of students	Assessment 2 # of students	Assessment 1 # of students	Assessment 2 # of students
90 - 100	2	2	8	7
80 - 89	5	4	14	12
70 - 79	6	3	4	6
60 -69	7	2	3	2
59 or less	9	18	2	2

The teacher-selected posttests both had an average score of 77 percent. The pretest averages were 60 percent and 53 percent. More than 80 percent of these students scored above an average 70 percent on the two posttests.

Table 4

Unit Tests Given Over Intervention Period
Number of Students in Score Classes
For Each Assessment

Score Class	Test 1 # of students	Test 2 # of students	Test 3 # of students	Test 4 # of students	Test 5 # of students
90 - 100 %	7	7	6	7	7
80 - 89 %	12	13	11	13	12
70 - 79%	5	2	8	5	4
60 - 69 %	4	4	3	3	3
59 % or less	1	3	3	1	3

The tests given after each unit of study during the intervention also showed improved reading comprehension when compared to the pretest scores of Table 3.

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Nine of these textbook tests were given. Due to the shortness of some tests as well as the similarity of the genres being assessed, some tests were grouped together, resulting in five testing situations. All tests results held to a fairly uniform pattern. Two-thirds of the students scored **above 80 percent** on all five test situations as Table 4's top-heavy numbers reveal.

The student responses on the Active Reader forms and other comprehension tasks assigned during the research period had equally satisfactory results for the researcher. The examples of student work found in Appendix D demonstrate interaction with the text. Higher order thinking skills are very evident in this work. Creativity in writings and drawings show synthesis of concepts; Active Reader form responses and graphic organizers show application and analysis; and self-assessment activities and reaction writings show metacognitive reflection.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The research preparatory for this project clearly and universally stated that an intertwining of higher order thinking and metacognitive skills was the cornerstone for improving reading comprehension. To this end, I designed the Active Reader form--the cornerstone of my intervention. This form is not an original design but a synthesis of all the metacognitive plans that I found in the research phase. Indeed, it is much like--but not identical to--the

metacognitive plan used in the research site's own textbook. But rather than using it peripherally, I made it the pivotal point of my reading assignments. The student had to interact with the text to complete this form. A superficial reading, barely beyond the basic recall stage, would not be acceptable. Nor could this assignment be copied from another student.

The Active Reader form worked successfully as an individual or as a group assignment. It could be assessed quickly so being overwhelmed with paper work was not a problem. Although I always had the entire form completed to ensure that students would begin to internalize the routine, the potential to ask for just one section (or sections) to be more formally written up for an assignment was available. And, as the data shows, an Active Reader form, filled out with attention and effort, results in good test scores.

This research site has a content-driven curriculum. This procedure worked well in those circumstances, too. By the time the student had actively and insightfully summarized the text at intervals, all information would be covered that was most likely to have been in the text's "end-of-story" questions. So the traditional goals of most reading assignments--recall questions answered and the test successfully completed--were met.

The fact that higher order thinking skills and metacognitive reflection were built into the Active Reader form made it relatively effortless to incorporate into an

assignment without being unduly time-consuming. This allowed these skills to always be exercised without infringing upon a content-driven curriculum's inflexible time schedule. If time was available, however, these skills could easily be drawn out to complete comprehension tasks that involved presentations and performances.

To begin teaching interactive reading **much** patience is needed. The traditional end-of-story questions with right/wrong answers is hard for students to abandon. It takes time for students to believe that their own thoughts and reactions have validity, even if they aren't identical to everyone else's. As this confidence is achieved, and they realize that the teacher is more interested in a good interactive reading of a selection than in marking "right" or "wrong" responses, they really begin to prefer this kind of reading assignment to the traditional format. Discussions among students about assignments were very meaningful **to the student** as well as the teacher.

The number of students completing assignments increased, too. All it took was time and effort. Only those students who wouldn't put forth the effort needed to interactively read did poorly. Achieving higher than average test scores provided motivation as well.

Parental support was another added bonus. When it could be explained that the student's responses on the Active Reader form were valid as long as they showed interactive reading, parents would encourage their child

to complete these assignments. The parent did not feel the frustration of being placed between a child who complains that he just doesn't "get it" and a teacher who simply says do the work or fail. With an Active Reader form, there's no "I don't get this." If the student can read, he can fill out the form. Many a parental conference ended with the comment, "Why, Johnny can do this!"

I plan to continue using the Active Reader form/ Comprehension Task format. I have learned much about how a student's comprehension process actually works by reading and listening to the comments generated by these activities. Continual learning and observing of this process may see many modifications to the methods as presented in this research project, but I do feel that I have found a useful tool for improving reading comprehension that is relatively easy to implement, has a solidly researched foundation, and can be used with any ability level or curriculum.

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Appendices

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Name _____

A Secret for Two Quentin Reynolds (text page 45)

Selection Test

A. Thinking About the Selection. On the line at the right, write the letter of the answer that best completes the sentence.

1. The cooks on the block sing out their orders because they 1. ____

   a. are practicing for choir.
   b. know Pierre is blind.
   c. are trying to cheer themselves up.
   d. know Pierre cannot read or write.

2. One day Pierre comes to work with a 2. ____

   a. horse. b. container of milk. c. wagon. d. stick.

3. The other drivers have to 3. ____

   a. feed their horses.
   b. write down their orders.
   c. take care of Pierre.
   d. deliver milk on Prince Edward Street.

4. Pierre says he will retire 4. ____

   a. when Joseph is ready to retire.
   b. when he is sixty-five.
   c. when he loses his eyesight.
   d. if the president of the company insists.

5. When Pierre says, "I cannot see Joseph again," the driver is referring to the fact that 5. ____

   a. the horse has been taken from the stall.
   b. he doesn't want to look at the horse.
   c. the horse has died.
   d. he is blind.

B. Recognizing a Hidden Problem. Complete the following sentences by filling in the blanks with the appropriate words.

1. Pierre names his horse after a _____.
2. The other drivers said that the _____ would smile at Pierre.
3. The driver doesn't need to hold the _____.
4. Jacques sees a secret in the horse's _____.
5. In Pierre's eyes is mirrored his _____, Jacques thinks.

C. Finding Clues to a Hidden Problem. The following statements give clues to the hidden problem in the story. From the list that follows the statements, choose the hidden fact that each statement suggests. Write the letter of the hidden fact on the line next to the statement.
(Choices are on next page.)

1. Pierre tells Jacques that he doesn't want to retire. 1. ____

2. Joseph would skip two houses and stop at the third. 2. _____

3. Pierre always wears a heavy cap over his eyes. 3. _____

4. Pierre limps home slowly after his work is finished. 4. _____

5. Jacques teases Pierre, saying that maybe he has gout, when he notices the driver's walking stick. 5. _____

Use one choice twice

a. Jacques doesn't know that Pierre is blind.
b. Pierre doesn't want anyone to know that he is blind.
c. Pierre has become dependent on Joseph.
d. The horse understands that Pierre is blind.

D. **Finding the Origins of English Words.** Match each word in the left column with its origin in the right column. Write the letter of the origin on the line next to the word from which it comes.

_____ 1. differ	a. Algonquian Indian, *mokussin*
_____ 2. investigate	b. Old English, *ofer*
_____ 3. celery	c. Middle English, *differen*
_____ 4. moccasin	d. French, *céleri*
_____ 5. over	e. Latin, *investigatus*

Name _____ Appendix A

Pretest #2

Zoo Edward D. Hoch (text page 51)

Selection Test

A. Thinking About the Section. Complete the following sentences by filling in the blanks with the appropriate words.

1. The story begins in _____.
2. People are lining up to see Professor Hugo's Interplanetary _____.
3. This year Professor Hugo has brought the _____ people.
4. The Kaanians travel to Earth as _____.
5. The story ends on planet _____.

B. Understanding Plot and Point of View. On the line at the right, write the letter of the answer that best completes the sentence. (See p. 50, "Plot and Point of View")

1. The position from which a writer tells a story is called the 1. ____
   a. objective viewpoint. c. point of view.
   b. third person. d. historical present.
2. The story of "Zoo" is told from 2. ____
   a. two different angles. c. the Kaanians' viewpoint.
   b. the Earthlings' viewpoint. d. Professor Hugo's viewpoint.
3. The Kaanians' point of view is revealed when 3. ____
   a. one of them attacks an Earthling.
   b. the scene shifts to their planet.
   c. one of them writes a letter home.
   d. Professor Hugo interviews one of them.
4. The Kaanians consider it strange that Earthlings 4. ____
   a. wear clothes. b. watch television. c. use computers. d. do homework.
5. Changing the story's point of view makes it more 5. ____
   a. suspenseful. b. mysterious. c. confusing. d. humorous.

C. Considering Other Points of View. Complete each sentence with the best word from the list that follows the sentences. (Choices on back)

1. The Earthlings consider the Kaanians frightening but _____.
2. The Kaanians think of themselves as _____.
3. The Kaanians think Earthlings may be _____.

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4. Neither group imagines the other's _____ point of view.

5. The writer regards the story's events in an _____ way.

normal	dangerous	different	fascinating	accepting

Selection Test

A. Thinking About the Selection. On the line at the right, write in the letter of the answer that best completes the sentence.

1. At the beginning of the story, Mama and the girls wish 1. ____

   a. for a quick resolution.
   b. that their lives will stay the same.
   c. that they were never born.
   d. for a red convertible.

2. During his lunch hour Papa hopes to 2. ____

   a. buy a new house.
   b. get an extension from the Home Owners' Loan.
   c. pay the rent.
   d. take out a loan.

3. Maud Martha thinks that if they lose the house, Papa will 3. ____

   a. be very upset.
   b. feel satisfaction.
   c. be relieved.
   d. shrug it off.

4. As Mama and the girls watch Papa returning, they 4. ____

   a. certain he failed.
   b. unconcerned.
   c. optimistic.
   d. very anxious.

5. The family members obviously feel 5. ____

   a. certain about their future.
   b. proud of their home.
   c. grateful for democracy.
   d. nervous about the future.

B. Understanding a Universal Theme. Complete each sentence with the best word or phrase from the list that follows the sentences. (See p. 174, "Universal Theme")

1. When many people around the world can respond to a story, the story has a _____.
2. The theme in Gwendolyn Brooks's story is _____.
3. Another universal theme that often appears in stories is _____.
4. _____ would not be a universal theme.
5. In "Home," a universal theme is explored through particular details about a _____.

coming of age	desire to live in an expensive house	
black family in Chicago	love of home	universal theme

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C. **Reading Between the Lines.** From the list that follows in the incomplete sentences, choose the phrase that makes each sentence *most* true. Write the letter of the phrase on the line next to the sentence.

1. When Maud Martha thinks, "... the little line of white, somewhat ridged with smoked purple, and all that cream-shot saffron, would never drift across any western sky except that in back of this house," it shows that... 1. _____

2. When Helen says, "... this is a relief. If this hadn't come up, we would have gone on, just dragged on, hanging out here forever," it shows that... 2. _____

3. When the narrator says, "Those flats, as the girls and Mamma knew well, were burdens on wages twice the size of Papa's," it shows that... 3. _____

4. When Helen says, "I'd like some of my friends to just casually see that we're homeowners," it shows that... 4. _____

5. When the narrator says Maud Martha tried to "keep the fronts of her eyes dry," it shows that... 5. _____

a. she's trying to avoid crying.
b. the family cannot move to one of the flats.
c. she feels proud and happy.
d. she's trying to make the best of a bad situation.
e. she feels that her house is very special.

Name _____ Appendix A -- Posttest #2

After Twenty Years O. Henry (text page 205)

Selection Test

A. Thinking About the Selection. Complete the following sentences by filling in the blanks with the appropriate words.

1. As the story opens, a _____ is walking down the street.
2. He approaches a man standing in a _____.
3. The large _____ scarfpin Bob wears suggests that he has been successful.
4. The man Bob thought was his friend says Bob is under _____.
5. The story's ending shows that Bob became wealthy through a life of _____.

B. Reviewing the Short Story. Complete each sentence with the best word from the list that follows the sentences. (See p.204)

1. The story's _____ is New York City on a dark, rainy night.
2. Bob is one of the main _____ of the story.
3. The _____ of the story centers on the internal conflict Jimmy experiences deciding whether or not to arrest Bob and the external conflict Bob experiences wondering whether or not Jimmy will arrive.
4. The idea that time affects people in different ways, changing some from good to bad, is the _____ of the story.
5. The _____ of the story occurs when Bob realizes that the man he has been walking with is not Jimmy.

climax (see "plot") setting characters plot theme

C. Drawing Conclusions From Evidence. Read the following conclusion from "After Twenty Years." Decide whether each of the five sentences that follow is or is not evidence supporting the conclusion. Write "yes" on the line at the right if the sentence supports the conclusion. Write "no" if the sentence is not evidence supporting the conclusion.

"yes" (3)
"no" (2)

Bob had made a fortune in the twenty years since he last saw Jimmy.

1. Bob had a little white scar near his right eyebrow. 1. _____
2. Bob's scarfpin was a large, oddly set diamond. 2. _____
3. Jimmy and Bob lost track of each other after Bob had been away for a year or two. 3. _____
4. Bob pulled out a handsome watch, its lid set with small diamonds, and announced the time. 4. _____
5. When asked by the man posing as Jimmy how the West has treated him, Bob replied "Bully; it has given me everything I asked it for." 5. _____

Appendix B

Original Form

ACTIVE READER FORM Name _____

_____

Title: _____ _____

_____ _____

Author: _____ _____

_____ Class _____

Question:

Predict:

Clarify:

Summarize (Narrative, Outline, Creative Map, etc.) **ATTACH SHEET**

Pull It Together:

tneme _____

_____

_____

What did tne story say to you? How did you feel about tne story?

Appendix B

Original Form

ASSESSMENT Active Reader Form

NEATNESS/APPEARANCE

over-all appearance neat & easy to read	OK	somewnat messy	not acceptable
10	8	5	0

ACTIVE THINKING SHOWN/SECTIONS FILLED IN

Yes! very complete	Good	OK	not acceptable
15	10	5	0

ACCURATE THINKING SHOWN

accurate	mostly accurate	often inaccurate
10	5	0

INSIGHTFUL THINKING SHOWN

Impressive! very insightful	good insight often shown	occasional insight shown	insightful thinking NOT shown
15	10	5	0

Comments:

TOTAL: _____ / 50

45 - 50 **A**
40 - 44 **B**
35 - 39 **C**
30 - 34 **D**
29↓ **F**

Appendix B

Revised Form

ACTIVE READER FORM

Name
Class

Title
Author
pages

Purpose-setting Question:

Summarize at Intervals	Questions, Clarifications, Predictions???
← 3/4 page →	← 1/4 page →

Answer to Purpose-setting Question:

Theme:

Your Reaction: (Name some things you learned; what impressed you (positively or negatively); what one (or more) things will you remember; this reminds me of..., etc.)

Additional assignments may be chosen from the following:

narrative summary
creative map
outline
other:_____

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Appendix B

Revised Form

ASSESSMENT Active Reader Form

Used Correct Active Reader Form

perfect form/mostly accurate in form/form not followed

10 5 0

Neatness/Appearance

over-all appearance neat/ OK /somewhat messy/not acceptable
& easy to read

10 8 5 0

Active/Insightful Thinking Shown

Impressive! /good insight /occasional insight/insightful thinking
very insightful often shown shown **NOT** shown

30 25 20 0

COMMENTS:

TOTAL:_____/50

45 - 50 A
40 - 44 B
35 - 39 C
30 - 34 D
29↓ F

Appendix C

Examples of
Purpose-Setting Questions
and Comprehenson Tasks

FABLES, MYTHS, & LEGENDS

Purpose-setting Question: What are the characteristics of a fable, a myth, and a legend?

Comprehension Tasks:
1. complete a Venn diagram for the similarities and the differences of a fable, a myth, and a legend
2. write a fable or a myth or a legend according to the criteria in the Venn diagram

NONFICTION

Purpose-setting Question: explain the four methods that the authors suggested could help a reader understand and appreciate poetry more

Comprehension Task: apply one of these methods to **two** poems in the unit; you may use the same method for each poem or a different method for each poem

POETRY

Purpose-Setting Questions

"Winter" by Nikki Giovanni
"Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" by Robert Frost
} What is important about winter in each poem?

"--in Just" by e e cummings — How does the way the poem is printed affect the way you feel about the poem?

"Season at the Shore" by Phyllis McGinley
- To which of your five senses does McGinley appeal in this poem?
- What consonant sound is repeated the most?

"When the Frost is on the Punkin"
by James Whitcomb Riley

What things does Riley like best about fall?

Comprehension Task: 1. write an original poem
--minimum: 20 lines
may be one poem or 2-3 shorter ones
--may or may not rhyme
--show knowledge of poetic concepts
alliteration
simile
metaphor
imagery
repetition
etc.
--form may be of your choice or a limerick, a haiku, a "shape" poem, etc.

(Poems will be read aloud to class)

2. find a poem you like
--minimun: 20 lines
may be one poem or 2-3 shorter ones

POETRY READINGS

Name of Poem	Poet's Name	COMMENTS
		A. 2 or more comments about poem(s) that show good listening B. 1 or more comments about poem(s) that show knowledge of poetic principles

(Form that student fills out during readings)

Appendix D

Examples of Student Work

An Original Fable

Two Strange Friends

It all started on a farm in Nebraska. On this farm there was a cat named Mitsy. She was black and white and very adventuresome. She liked to explore new places and do different things like smell flowers and play with the other animals on the farm. She didn't want to sleep all day like the other cats and prowl all night. She liked to sleep at night and explore during the day.

One day Mitsy was exploring the hayloft when she heard a cry coming from the corner of the loft. Curiously, yet cautiously, she approached the corner. There she found a hole. In the hole was a little gray mouse. He could not get out of the hole. Mitsy told him she would help. She put her tail into the hole and the mouse climbed out of the hole.

"Thank you," he said. "I was afraid you would eat me."

"I would never hurt someone in trouble," said Mitsy.

"Well, I'm glad you're like that! My name is Squeaks. What's yours?"

"My name is Mitsy," she told him.

As MItsy and Squeaks continued to talk and get to know each other better, they found they had a lot in common. Squeaks liked to explore new places and do different things too. But his family wanted him to stay hidden all day and only rush out quickly for a little food and then hurry back so he wouldn't get eaten by the cats.

Over the next few days, Mitsy and Squeaks became great friends. They went exploring every day and had great adventures. But when their families found out, they were horrified! A cat and a mouse CAN"T be friends!

Mitsy and Squeaks decided that they would rather be friends and live somewhere else than be kept apart by their families. So they moved to the big city and lived happily ever after. In the big city there were lots and lots of things to explore.

MORAL: Don't let anyone influence your choice of friends.

Illustration for "Two Strange Friends"

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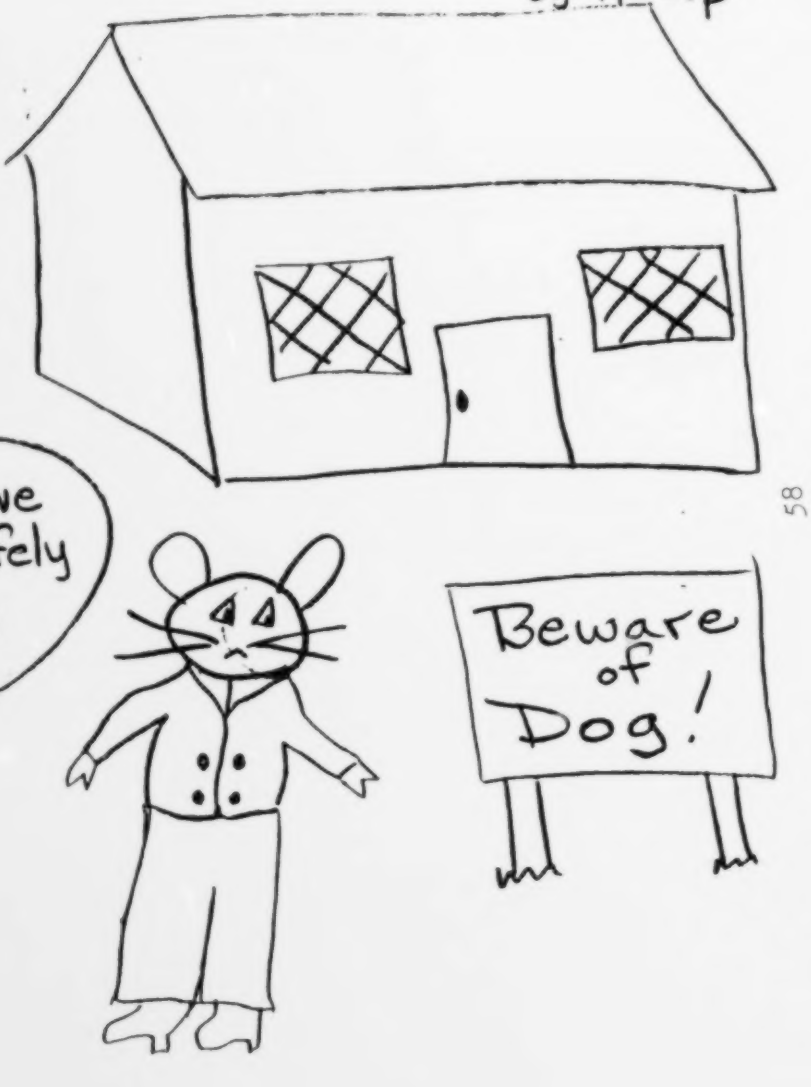
Creative Map (Fable)

The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse

by Aesop



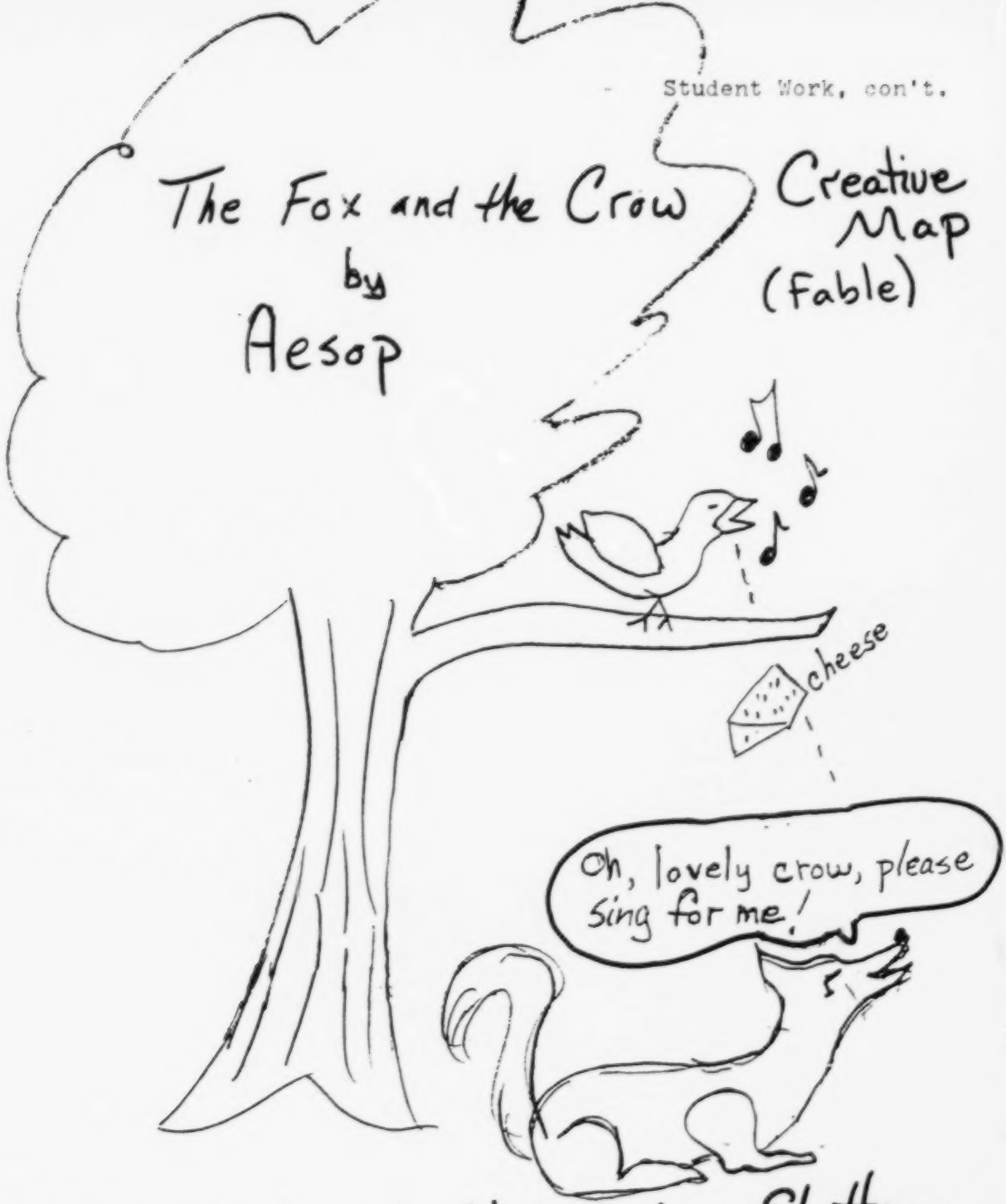
The Fox and the Crow

by

Aesop

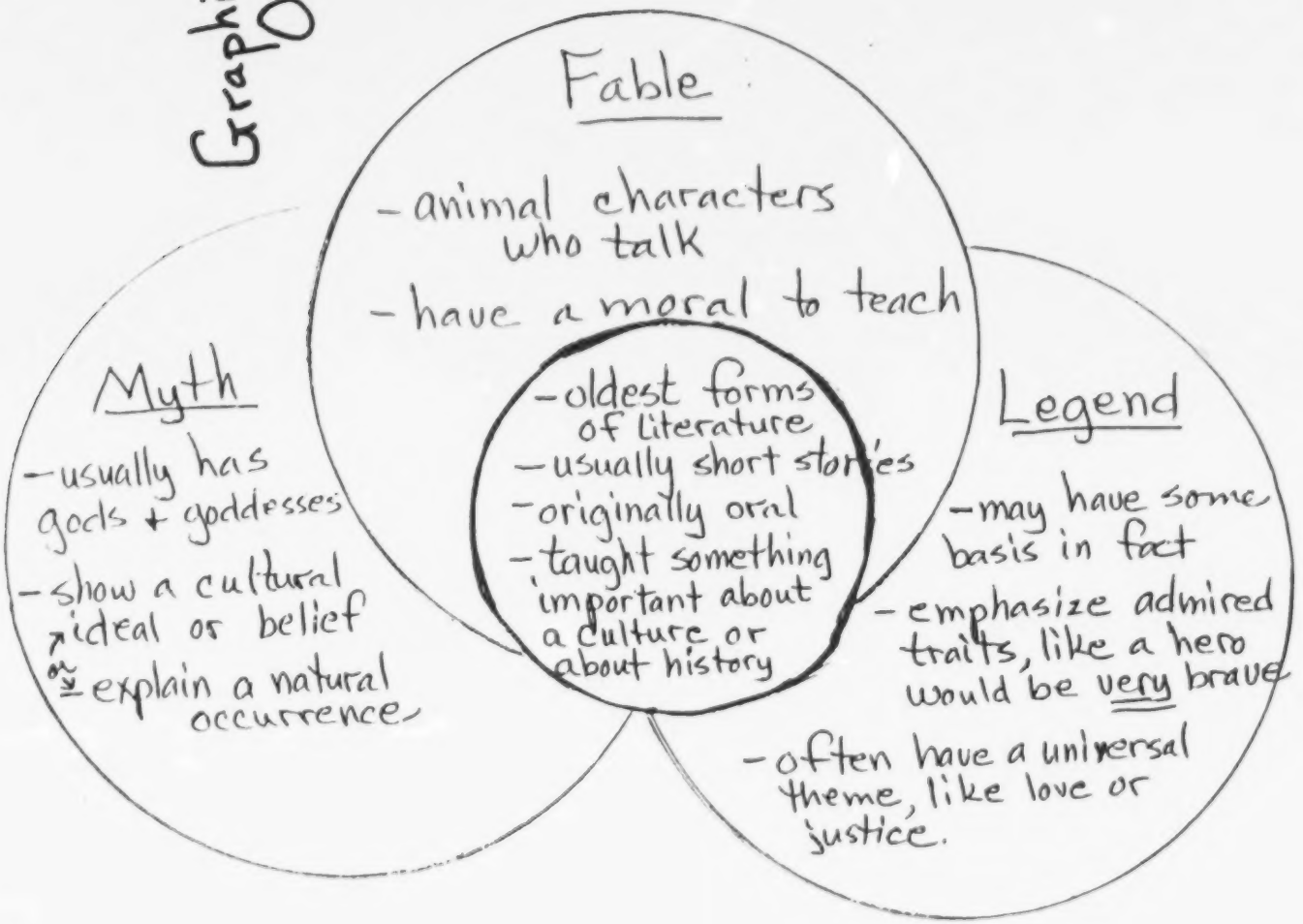
Creative Map

(Fable)



Don't trust those who flatter you unless you are sure they don't want something from you.

Graphic Organizer


Fable
- animal characters who talk
- have a moral to teach
Myth
- usually has gods + goddesses
- show a cultural ideal or belief
or
- explain a natural occurrence
Legend
- may have some basis in fact
- emphasize admired traits, like a hero would be very brave
- often have a universal theme, like love or justice.
- oldest forms of literature
- usually short stories
- originally oral
- taught something important about a culture or about history

ACTIVE READER FORM (Original)

Student Work, con't.

Myth

Title: Demeter and Persephone

Author: Anne Terry White

Class Reading

Question: Who's Demeter and Persephone? Are they married? Also are they nice or mean myths?

Predict: I predict that Demeter will make Persephone do something she doesn't want to do.

Clarify: Persephone is Demeter's daughter. No there not married there mother and daughter. Their both nice myths.

Summarize (Narrative, Outline, Creative Map, etc.) ATTACH SHEET

Pull It Together:

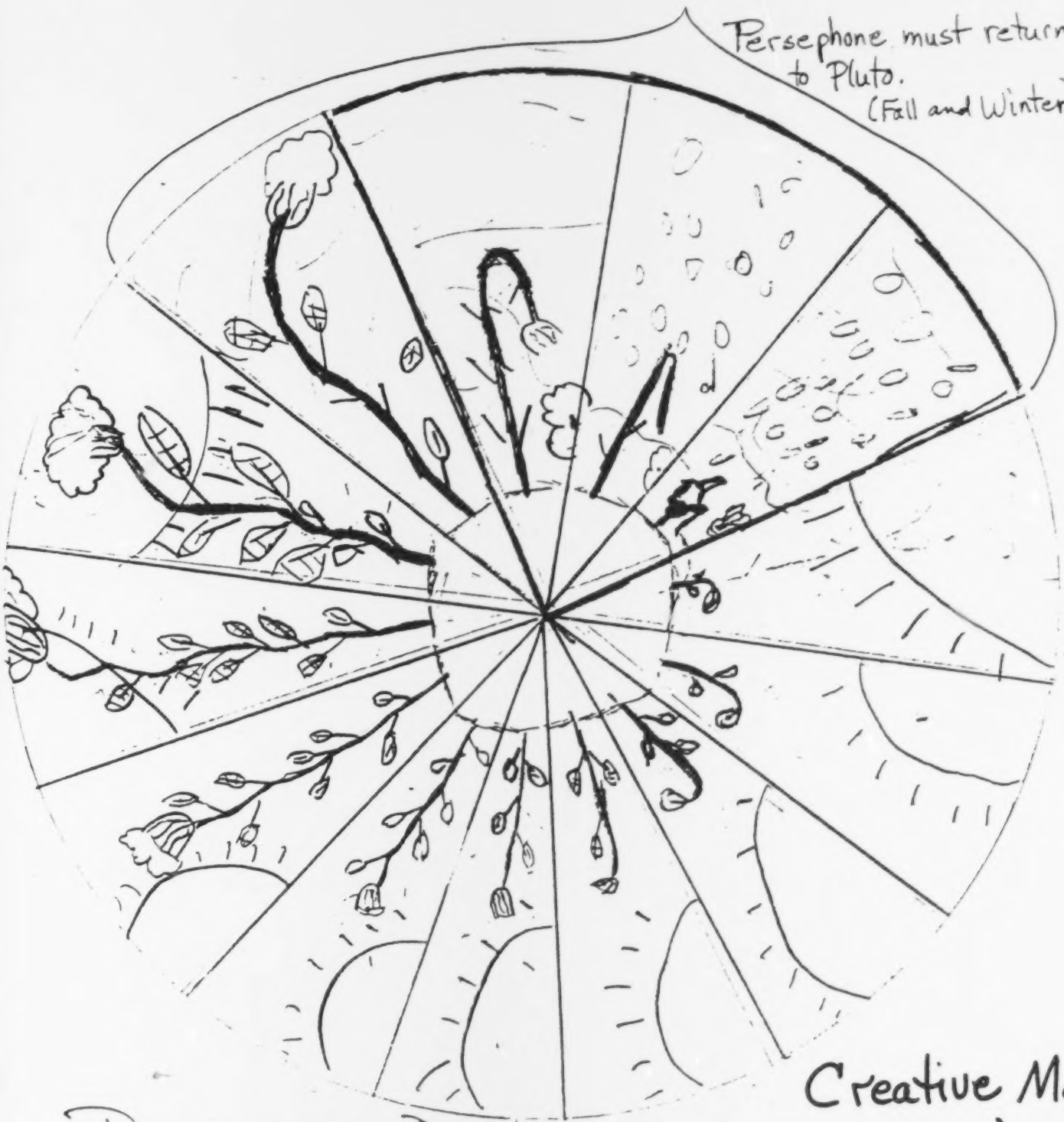
theme Pluto took Persephone to the underground and she was unhappy later Zeus (Pluto) agreed Pluto let her go but she did'nt want, only 4 or 8 months.

What did the story say to you? How did you feel about the story?

I felt about this story sad. I think you can't always have everything you want.

Demeter and Persephone

Student Work, con't.



Creative Map (Myth)

ACTIVE READER FORM (Original)

Student Work, con't.

Myth

Title: Icarus and Daedalus

Author: Dorothy Dixon Phillips

Class Reading 8

Question: Is Icarus going to die and the world is going to be bad and not safe anymore?

Predict: For this story I think the opposites are going to happen I think they are going to do something bad kind something bad is going to happen, and Icarus is going to die

Clarify: I wasn't quite right it seemed to easily wasn't that bad either, but I was right Icarus died

Summarize (Narrative, Outline, Creative Map) etc.) ATTACH SHEET

Pull It Together:

theme I liked this story but I like this story better than the first one It was ok I think it's good for us to learn about the past.

What did the story say to you? How did you feel about the story?

This story told me not to be selfish. After reading this story I got like I needed to change a bit.

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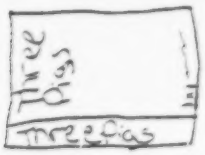
"Icarus and Daedalus"

Creative Map
(Myth)

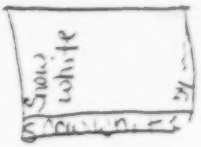
Student Work, con't.

All Stories Are Anansi's

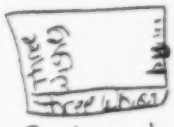
Creative Map (Legend)



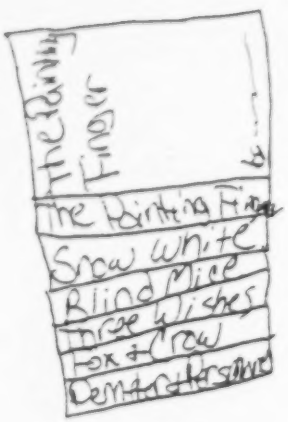
Anansi, a Spider, asks the Sky God if she could buy all of the stories in the world

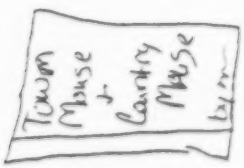


The Sky God said yes, but you have to get me one thing I say to get, in order to have all the stories in the world.



So, Anansi gets all of them but the Sky God asked for one and she got the stories.





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Anansi goes to Sky God to ask for the stories.

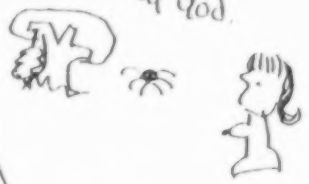
She says he has to defeat a snake and bring it to her.

He tricks the python proving brains are better than muscles

He goes back to the Sky God. She says he has to bring her a leopard.

Again he uses brains to trick the leopard.

He takes the leopard to the Sky God.



Anansi get control of all books

"All Stories Are Anansi's"

Creative Map (Legend)

Student Work, con't.

All Stories Are Animals"

Trap

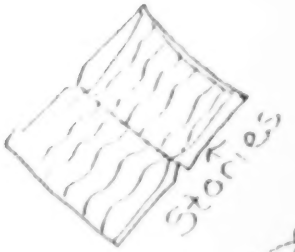
Leopard
Okoos

Spider

Ormini
Pythun

Nyoma

Creative Map
(Legend)



Spots

Clever
&
Smart

Strong

Theme:
If you are clever &
smart you accomplish
more than someone
who's strong.

Active Reader Form (revised) Nonfiction

The Mystery and Wonder of Words

Maxwell Nurnberg

1. It means how the time progresses more and more is added to it like a story.

2. The analogy means the way we invented this to make our hands more powerful to work the earth. We put sounds together, to form words to be able to communicate.

3. He wanted [redacted] to reinact the pain he felt stepping on the stone and the way he heard his own cry so that we could feel what he felt.

4. What the story is trying to say is people didn't learn to draw, talk, and write on their own. They learned from their surroundings and their pairs. Say you set a baby in the middle of the floor and you stick out your tongue, then the baby sticks out its tongue. The baby just learned how to stick out his tongue from the person teaching him.

5. Nurnberg is saying Ellen didn't learn how to speak by herself she learned from her surroundings like the car.

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I learned about the English words and how to use them in many types of texts and many ways to say them. I learned the foreign word learned how you say it.

I. The words we learn in a year because I a week during the semester. We usually know what we were talking about.

E. educate - bring up, train, mentally and morally; provide schooling for; train

school- institute for schooling; giving instructions on any subject.

student - person who goes to school to learn stuff like language.

Q. Words are mysterious because some are foreign or Spanish. Words are wonderful because they are used in a wonderful way like using your imagination. The words are mysterious because of the way in which they have come (Lissa).

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"Season at the Shore"
Phyllis McGinley
p. 508

Active Reader Form
(revised)
Poetry

PSQ- What thing does McGinley want you to feel at the end of the poem?

PSQ- What consonant sound is repeated the most

This poem is saying that sand is everywhere and espically at the beach & when you come home you will probably bring sand home with you.

APSQ- That when you come home from the beach you'll bring sand home with you.

APSQ- None of the consonant sounds are repeated she uses all different ones.

Theme: When you go to the beach don't be upset when the sand decides to go home with you.

Reaction: I think it was a neat poem. It reminded me of when I went to the beach with my aunt & she got really mad when she had said everywhere when we got home.

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"in Just-"
E.E. Cummings
pg 500

Active Reader Form (revised) Poetry

P.S.Q. How is your reading of the poem affected by the way it's written?

Summary

~~1st interval~~ is about the balloonmen who come out in spring time
2nd interval is about the boys who come from their games in spring
3rd interval is about how the balloonman is excited about spring and 2 girls come dancing
4th interval is about the activities kids do in spring and about how the balloonman is associated with goat-footed.

Questions, Clarifications predictions ???

P.S.Q. answer - It is more hard to read the poem and it is frustrating to try and understand the poem.

Theme: Spring is an exciting season and the children are excited about Spring, yet, so are balloonmen.

Reaction: I liked this poem but didn't understand how all the words were put together and what they meant. I also didn't understand the way it was written, But I was impressed by the poem overall.

"When the Frost Is on the Punkin"
James Whitcomb Riley
p. 512

PSQ- How does Riley feel about fall?

This poem is saying that in fall when frost is on a pumpkin you know winter is comming & that it is no longer spring or summer.

APSQ- He likes fall because of pumpkins, turkeys etc....

Theme: When there is frost you know fall is really here.

Reaction: This was a neat poem about fall. I think it was neat how he thought of that many things to say about fall.

Active Reader Form
(revised)
Poetry

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The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse Aesop Fables (text page 545)
The Fox and the Crow Aesop (text page 547)

Selection Test

A. Thinking About the Selections. On the line at the right, write the letter of the answer that best completes the sentence.

1. The Town Mouse visits the Country Mouse and finds country life 1. ____
   a. refreshing. c. frightening.
   b. superior to city life. d. inferior to city life.

2. In the city, the Town Mouse offers his country cousin 2. ____
   a. a humble meal. c. a place to sleep.
   b. hot tea. d. a grand banquet.

3. The Country Mouse thinks city life is 3. ____
   a. pleasantly exciting. c. dangerous.
   b. dirty. d. lonely.

4. The Fox told the Crow how beautiful she was because 4. ____
   a. he really thought she was. c. he felt sorry for her.
   b. he didn't know what else to say. d. he wanted to trick her.

5. When the Crow heard the Fox's compliment, she 5. ____
   a. laughed loudly. c. thanked him.
   b. sang so he could hear her voice. d. flew away.

Remember: "The Fox and the Crow" by Aesop and "The Fox and the Crow" by Thurber are different.

The Fox and the Crow James Thurber (text page 549)

Selection Test

A. Thinking About the Selection. On the line at the right, write the letter of the answer that best completes the sentence.

1. The fox flattered the crow because he 1. ____
   a. read he was supposed to. c. was a nice fox.
   b. thought the crow sang well. d. wanted something for himself.

2. The crow reacted to the fox's flattery by 2. ____

a. immediately singing.
b. disagreeing with him.
c. removing the cheese to talk.
d. agreeing with him.

3. When the crow did not drop the cheese, the fox 3. ____

a. left very hungry.
b. grabbed the cheese from him.
c. said he was very hungry.
d. decided he didn't want to eat.

4. The crow shared his lunch with the fox because he 4. ____

a. was kindhearted.
b. didn't want to hold the cheese.
c. had too much to eat himself.
d. wanted the fox to stay and listen.

5. Thurber's moral was 5. ____

a. *There's no praise like self-praise*
b. *Never listen to someone flattering you.*
c. *Always share what you have.*
d. *It's no good to praise someone who's not listening.*

The Boy and the Wolf Louis Untermeyer (text page 553)

Selection Test

A. Thinking About the Selection. On the line at the right, write the letter of the answer that best completes each sentence.

1. "The Boy and the Wolf" is written as 1. ____

a. prose. b. poetry. c. a journal entry. d. a play.

2. The boy liked to 2. ____

a. sleep. b. read. c. play. d. guard sheep.

3. At first, the boy cried "Wolf" when 3. ____

a. he saw a wolf.
b. he heard a wolf.
c. a lamb was lost.
d. he wanted company.

4. The villagers didn't heed the boy's last cry of wolf because 4. ____

a. they were busy.
b. they knew he didn't need help.
c. they didn't like him.
d. he had tricked them before.

5. The moral of "The Boy and the Wolf" is 5. ____

a. *Speak only when spoken to.*
b. *Liars aren't believed.*
c. *Sometimes liars tell the truth.*
d. *Truths can be lies.*

Name _____ Textbook Tests -- Myth #1

Demeter and Persephone Anne Terry White (text page 557)

Selection Test

A. Thinking About the Selection. Complete the following sentences by filling in the blanks with the appropriate words or phrase.

1. Eros shot Pluto with an arrow so that Pluto would _____
_____.
2. _____ saw Pluto take Persephone to the underworld.
3. Demeter blamed _____ for taking her daughter.
4. Persephone could leave the underworld, provided she did not _____
_____.
5. When Persephone lives with her mother at Eleusis, the time of the year is _____; when she lives with Pluto in the underworld, the time of year is _____.

B. Appreciating Myth. Answer the following questions.

1. How is an earthquake explained in "Demeter and Persephone"?
_____
_____
2. How does Pluto fall in love?
_____
_____
3. What causes a drought in "Demeter and Persephone"?
_____
_____
4. What causes spring in "Demeter and Persephone"?
_____
_____
5. What causes winter in "Demeter and Persephone"?
_____
_____

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Name _____

Icarus and Daedalus Josephine Preston Peabody (text page 581)

Selection Test

A. Thinking About the Selection. On the line at the right, write the letter of the answer that best completes the following sentences.

1. Daedalus lost favor with King Minos because 1. ____
   a. he built a wonderful labyrinth.
   b. the king's favor was fickle.
   c. he was too clever.
   d. the king was crazy.

2. To escape from the island, Daedalus fashioned a 2. ____
   a. boat.
   b. hot-air balloon.
   c. flying machine.
   d. pair of wings.

3. Daedalus told his son that if he flew too close to the sun 3. ____
   a. he would get burned.
   b. a fog would weigh him down.
   c. the feathers would melt.
   d. the light would blind him.

4. Daedalus also told his son that if he flew too close to the earth 4. ____
   a. a fog would weigh him down.
   b. he would hit a tree.
   c. the feathers would melt.
   d. birds would run into him.

5. In the end of the myth, Daedalus 5. ____
   a. was drowned, while Icarus lived.
   b. and Icarus go to Sicily.
   c. and Icarus both drowned.
   d. lived, but Icarus was drowned.

B. Understanding Characters in Myth. Answer the following questions.

1. What do readers learn about Daedalus's background from the storyteller?

   _____

   _____

2. What action of Daedalus shows readers how clever he is?

   _____

   _____

3. How do readers know that Daedalus cares about his son?

   _____

   _____

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4. What action of Icarus shows readers that he got very absorbed in his flying?

_____

_____

5. What action of Daedalus tells you he was grief-stricken at his loss?

_____

_____

C. **Comparing and Contrasting Characters in a Myth.** Decide whether each of the following sentences describes a similarity or a difference between Icarus and Daedalus. Write "similarity" or "difference" on the line at the right.

1. Icarus was trapped on an island with Daedalus. 1. _____
2. Daedulus is the father and Icarus is the son. 2. _____
3. Daedulus and Icarus love each other. 3. _____
4. Daedulus and Icarus are thrilled with flying. 4. _____
5. Daedulus is careful, and Icarus is daring. 5. _____

Hint: 3 are "similarity"
2 are "difference"

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Selection Test

A. Thinking About the Selection. On the line at the right, write the letter of the answer that best completes the sentence.

1. In the beginning, all stories belong to 1. ____

   a. Anansi. b. Onini. c. Nyame. d. Osebo.

2. The hornets listen to Anansi because they 2. ____

   a. respect Anansi.
   b. want to help Anansi get the stories.
   c. don't want to get wet.
   d. have always been foolish creatures.

3. Onini listens to Anansi because he 3. ____

   a. respects Anansi.
   b. wants to help Anansi get the stories.
   c. doesn't like Anansi's wife.
   d. wants to prove he's long and strong.

4. Osebo listens to Anansi because he 4. ____

   a. wants to be free.
   b. wants to have Anansi for dinner.
   c. wants to help Anansi get the stories.
   d. respects Anansi.

5. In the end, all stories belong to 5. ____

   a. Anansi. b. Onini. c. Nyame. d. Osebo.

B. Making Inferences About Characters in Folklore. Read each of the following sentences. If it is information that is directly stated from "All Stories Are Anansi's," write "stated" on the line at the right. If the sentence is an inference that can be made from the legend, write "inferred" on the line.

1. Anansi is clever. 1. _____
2. Anansi went home and made his plans. 2. _____
3. Onini the python is vain. 3. _____
4. Osebo the leopard is naive. 4. _____
5. All stories are Anansi's. 5. _____

Hint: 2 are "stated"
3 are "inferred"

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C. Understanding the Trickster in Folklore.

On your own paper, answer these questions in complete sentences. Be complete complete and detailed in your answers. Attach your paper to the test sheet.

1. Why does Anansi use trickery?
2. How does Anansi get the hornets for the Sky God?
3. How does Anansi get Onini for the Sky God?
4. How does Anansi get Osebo for the Sky God?
5. What must men acknowledge after Anansi completes his trickery?

Name _____ Textbook Tests -- Legend #2

Popocatepetl and Ixtlaccihuatl Juliet Piggott (text page 599)

Selection Test

A. Thinking About the Selection. On the line at the right, write the letter of the phrase that best completes the sentence.

1. The Emperor was thought to be shortsighted because he 1. _____

   a. loved his daughter so much.
   b. never saw his daughter.
   c. taught his daughter how to rule.
   d. wouldn't allow his daughter to marry.

2. Ixtlaccihuatl and Popocatepetl were in love, but they 2. _____

   a. didn't realize it. b. couldn't marry. c. didn't want to be. d. hid it.

3. To save his city from the enemy tribe, the Emperor 3. _____

   a. bribed his warriors.
   b. made a sacrifice to the gods.
   c. ransomed his daughter.
   d. hired more warriors.

4. At the end of the war, Ixtlaccihuatl is told 4. _____

   a. she must marry a man other than Popo.
   b. Popo is wounded, but will return very soon.
   c. Popo is dead.
   d. she can marry Popo.

5. When Popo hears of Ixtla's fate, he 5. _____

   a. avenges his death and acts to watch over her forever.
   b. is glad that she is no longer suffering.
   c. kills the Emperor.
   d. is relieved.

B. Understanding Motivation in Legend. Read each of the following actions from "Popocatepetl and Ixtlaccihuatl" and the list of motivations, or reasons, below it. Decide which reason is the best one for that action. Then write the letter of your choice on the line at the right.

1. As a young woman, Ixtla did not enjoy parties. 1. _____

   a. Her father forbid her to go to parties.
   b. She had great responsibilities.
   c. She never enjoyed people.
   d. She had no sense of humor.

2. The enemies of the Emperor attacked his city. 2. _____

   a. They didn't like him.
   b. They wanted to prove their power.
   c. They wanted the hand of his daughter.
   d. They knew the Emperor was weak.

3. The warriors tell Ixtla that Popo is dead. 3. _____

   a. The warriors are jealous of Popo.
   b. The warriors thought Popo was dead.
   c. The warriors wanted to tease Ixtla.
   d. The warriors thought the Emperor wanted to hear that news.

4. Ixtla dies. 4. _____

   a. Ixtla is sick.
   b. Ixtla is an only child.
   c. Ixtla doesn't want to live without Popo.
   d. Ixtla doesn't want to see Popo.

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5. Popo becomes a volcano. 5. _____

a. Popo wants to get revenge for Ixtla's death.
b. Popo wants to watch over Ixtla forever.
c. Popo is punished by the Emperor.
d. Popo believes volcanoes are mighty warriors.

C. **Identifying Imaginative Details.** Read each of the following details from the legend "Popocatepetl and Ixtlaccihuatl." Decide whether the detail is an imaginative one or one based on historical events. For each detail, write "imaginative" or "factual" on the line at the right.

1. The Spaniards destroyed much of Tenochtitlan. 1. _____
2. The volcano erupted in Aztec days. 2. _____
3. Ixtla was also very pretty, even beautiful. 3. _____
4. The volcano emits smoke in memory of Ixtla. 4. _____
5. The volcano's name means "Smoking Mountain." 5. _____

Hint: 3 are factual
2 are imaginative

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How to Enjoy Poetry James Dickey (text page 375)

Selection Test

A. Thinking About the Selection. On the line at right, write the letter of the answer that best completes the sentence.

1. Dickey says that many people think poetry was invented as _____ 1. _____
   a. a kind of dance. c. a way of remembering things.
   b. a school subject. d. the first language.

2. Dickey promises that if you "give" to a poem it will _____ 2. _____
   a. entertain you. c. give to you.
   b. relax you. d. become clearer to you.

3. In the Huxley poem that Dickey quotes, the speaker says the stars are _____ 3. _____
   a. everyone's. b. eternal. c. radiant. d. his.

4. Dickey connects the power of rhyme and rhythm with _____ 4. _____
   a. astronomy. b. botony. c. biology. d. economics.

5. Dickey says that poetry can affect your overall _____ 5. _____
   a. thinking. b. feeling. c. well-being. d. grades.

B. Understanding the Expository Essay. Complete each sentence with the best word from the list that follows the sentences.

1. The purpose of an expository essay is to _____ a subject. (p. 374)
2. One way to learn to enjoy poetry is to _____ to it very personally.
3. The quotations from other poets _____ Dickey's views.
4. In learning about poetry, you can understand the _____ of the world and of words.
5. Dickey suggests that student try writing a _____.

respond	relationship	explain	limerick	support

C. Recognizing the Latin Root *vita*. Complete each sentence with the best word or phrase from the list that follows the sentences. (p. 864)

1. Dickey thinks poetry is a _____ human activity.
2. After a good swim, she felt full of _____.
3. The lack of just one _____ can cause health problems.

4. The doctor said the boy's _____ showed he was doing better.

5. Fertilizer can _____ poor soil.

vitality	vital	vitamin	vital signs	vitalize

Vocabulary Check (p. 374)

A. Match each word in the left column with its definition in the right column. Write the letter of the definition on the line next to the word it defines

_____ 1. definitive	_____ 5. inevitability
_____ 2. vital	_____ 6. compelling
_____ 3. prose	_____ 7. interacts
_____ 4. encounter	_____ 8. emblems

a. certainty
b. nonpoetic language
c. affects and is affected by
d. signs
e. having a powerful effect
f. essential to life
g. the last word; final
h. meeting

B. Read each sentence. Complete the sentence with the best word from the list in the box. Use each word only once.

definitive	vital	prose	encounter
inevitability	compelling	interacts	emblems

1. "The beginning of your true _____ with poetry should be simple."

2. "You will come to understand the world as it _____ with words, as it can be re-created by words, by rhythms and by images."

3. "How can these things fit into the limerick form . . . so that the rhymes 'pay off,' and give that sense of completion and _____ that is so deliciously memorable . . . ?"

4. "That is plain-spoken and _____."

5. "Up from among the _____ of the wind into its heart of power . . . ."

6. "Part of the spell in poetry is in the rhythm of language, used by poets who understand how powerful a factor rhythm can be, how _____ and unforgettable."

7. "You'll understand that this condition is one charged with _____ possibilities."

8. "Almost anything put into rhythm and rhyme is more memorable than the same thing said in _____."

Name _____

The Mystery and Wonder of Words Maxwell Nurnberg (text page 401)

Selection Test

A. Thinking About the Selection. On the line at the right, write the letter of the answer that best completes the sentence.

1. Nurnberg describes language as a(n) 1. ____

   a. fish net. c. trick.
   b. obstacle. d. tool.

2. Human beings invented words to 2. ____

   a. explain accidents. c. help pass the time.
   b. communicate with one another. d. predict events.

3. Nurnberg says that the first words were probably 3. ____

   a. general sound effects. c. English words.
   b. "pain" or "blood." d. "mama" or "dada."

4. We use the word "breakfast" for morning meals because 4. ____

   a. it means "early" in Latin.
   b. breakfast once consisted only of broken bread.
   c. it signifies eating for the first time since the evening before.
   d. it once referred to "lunch."

5. By looking at the roots of words, you can 5. ____

   a. break their code.
   b. learn about their origins.
   c. trace all language to ancient South America.
   d. predict your test scores.

B. Varying Rates of Reading. Complete the following sentences by filling in the blanks with the appropriate words. (p. 400)

1. Reading to absorb everything a piece of writing contains is called

   _____ reading.

2. Reading to get a general idea of what a piece is about is called

   _____.

3. Reading to get information about a specific subject or item is called

   _____.

4. If you were looking for a job as a waiter, you might _____ the want ads in the newspaper.

5. To appreciate a poem or story fully, _____ is necessary.

C. Distinguishing Fact From Speculation. Decide whether the following quotations are facts or speculations. Write either "fact" or "opinion" on the line next to each sentence.

1. "The first humans . . . were probably able to make only those sounds that expressed the simplest feelings." 1. _____

2. ". . . the individual, especially in his earliest stages, goes through a development similar to those stages that the human race has gone through." 2. _____

3. "The Spaniards say, *Adios* and the Italians, *Addio*." 3. _____

4. ". . . *com* is a prefix meaning 'with' or 'together'." 4. _____

5. ". . . the word *alphabet* is made up of the first two Greek letters—*alpha* and *beta*." 5. _____

Hint: 2 are opinion
3 are fact

Vocabulary Check (p. 400)

A. Match each word in the left column with its definition in the right column. Write the letter of the definition on the line next to the word it defines.

_____ 1. unique	a. very long periods of time
_____ 2. aeons	b. having no equal
_____ 3. distinctions	c. things done to make up for a loss
_____ 4. convey	d. thing similar to something else
_____ 5. amends	e. differences of meaning
_____ 6. equivalent	f. make known

B. Read each sentence. Complete the sentence with the best word from the list in the box. Use each word only once.

equivalent	aeons	distinctions
convey	amends	unique

1. "One day, _____ ago, it is possible that an early ancestor of ours . . . suddenly happened to step on a sharp stone."
2. "For Ellen, anything that moved was a car. No _____ or refinements were made."
3. "If you atone, if you make _____, for something you have done, you feel 'at one' again with whomever you may have offended.
4. ". . . other words were found for stone and sharp and pain and wound and blood and sole that had specific, _____ meanings.
5. "Undoubtedly he uttered a startled, piercing cry of pain—the primitive _____ of a word like *Ouch!*"
6. "They must have made sounds like the bark of a dog to _____ excitement or like the purr of a cat to show contentment."

In Just— E. E. Cummings (text page 500)
Winter Nikki Giovanni (text page 502)
Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening Robert Frost (text page 504)

Selection Test

A. Thinking About the Selections. On the line at the right, write the letter of the answer that best completes the sentence.

1. The way the lines are arranged in Cummings's poem suggests 1. ____
   a. a rigid structure.
   b. children jumping and skipping.
   c. ice skating.
   d. a cat.

2. His poem expresses the feeling that spring is 2. ____
   a. a busy time.
   b. muddy and unpleasant.
   c. a joyful time.
   d. corny.

3. In "Winter" the speaker tells how animals 3. ____
   a. survive the cold.
   b. prepare for winter.
   c. perish in the snow.
   d. like the cold.

4. The speaker in Frost's poem stops by the woods to 4. ____
   a. collect firewood.
   b. watch the snow fall.
   c. hide from someone.
   d. try to remember something.

5. Besides describing a winter scene, Frost's poem seems to be about 5. ____
   a. the world of farm animals.
   b. Santa Claus.
   c. pine trees.
   d. something mysterious in the woods that appeals to the speaker.

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Season at the Shore Phyllis McGinley (text page 508)
When the Frost Is on the Punkin James Whitcomb Riley (text page 512)

Selection Test

A. Thinking About the Selections. On the line at the right, fill in the letter of the answer that best completes the sentence.

1. The speaker in "Season at the Shore" describes the setting of the poem by 1. ____
   a. discussing the landscape.
   b. listing the colors of the water.
   c. using many images of sand.
   d. providing stage directions.

2. The images in the poem appeal particularly to the sense of 2. ____
   a. taste. b. sight. c. touch. d. smell.

3. The speaker in "When the Frost Is on the Punkin" likes autumn because 3. ____
   a. flowers and trees bloom.
   b. the weather is crisp and hearty.
   c. school starts again.
   d. he is on vacation then.

4. Probably the speaker of this poem is a 4. ____
   a. preacher.
   b. person from the city.
   c. student.
   d. farmer.

5. The phrase "a pictur' that no painter has the colorin' to mock" refers to a 5. ____
   a. painter who has run out of paint.
   b. pitcher that is brightly colored.
   c. scene more vivid than art.
   d. scene an artist would not make fun of.

November, brooding, won't admit
That lush October bothers it
A bit—no, not a little bit.
It shrugs a bony shoulder
And, murmuring "I'm older,"
Insists in chilly cheerless tones
There's wisdom in its seasoned bones.
Stripped bare of gaudy, bright pretense,
I grant its comments make some sense,
And handsome is as handsome does—
But, oh, what joy October was!

—Maurice Carroll,
in New York Times

Fill out an Active Reader Form for this poem.

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Appendix F

Scoring Rubrics

CREATIVE WRITING

Name: _____

_____

_____

_____

Class: _____

ASSESSMENT

	STUDENT yes/no	TEACHER points
SETTING OK?	_____	_____ / 10
GOOD CHARACTERS?	_____	_____ / 20
PLOT (shows a problem that is solved)	_____	_____ / 20
THEME is apparent?	_____	_____ / 15
NEATNESS?	_____	_____ / 10
GRAMMAR/PUNCTUATION OK?	_____	_____ / 10
STORY HAS DETAIL/DESCRIPTION?	_____	_____ / 15

TOTAL _____ / 100

90 - 100	**A**
80 - 89	**B**
70 - 79	**C**
60 - 69	**D**
59↓	**F**

Comments:

POETRY READING ASSESSMENT

	YES!	OK	NO
Comments show good **ACTIVE LISTENING**	10	5	0
Comments show **POETIC KNOWLEDGE**	10	5	0

TOTAL:_____

20 A
15 B
10 C
5 D
0 F